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Mr. HOLMES'S

THANKSGIVING SERMON,

February 19, 1795.

A

SERMON,

ON THE

FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS

OF

AMERICA;

PREACHED AT CAMBRIDGE,

FEBRUARY 19, 1795,

THE DAY APPOINTED

BY THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

FOR A

NATIONAL THANKSGIVING.

BY ABIEL HOLMES, *A. M.*

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE.

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1795.

TO

THE FIRST SOCIETY,

AND

TO THE UNIVERSITY,

IN

CAMBRIDGE,

This DISCOURSE,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR UNITED REQUEST,

IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

A

SERMON

ON THE

FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS OF AMERICA.

DEUTERONOMY XXXIII. 29.

Happy art thou, O Iſrael: who is like unto thee, O people ſaved by the LORD, *the ſhield of thy help, and who is the ſword of thy excellency!*

TO contemplate our bleſſings is, at once, a pleaſing, and an improving, exerciſe. It is pleaſing, as it argues a benevolent and noble diſpoſition of ſoul on the part of him who beſtows them, and as it gives us the aſſurance, that we are the objects of his regard. It is improving, as it cheriſhes in the boſom a grateful temper, as it inſpires the wiſh to pay, if poſſible, ſome proportional tribute in return, and as it prompts us to an imitation of that very beneficence which we ourſelves experience.—If ſuch, then, be the pleaſure, ſuch the improvement, to be derived from the contemplation of benefits in general, even when conferred by man;

how

how ſublime muſt be the pleaſure, how vaſt the improvement, ariſing from a religious contemplation of the benefits received from GOD! Human benefits are, at beſt, but ſcanty rivulets. Divine benefits are copious and majeſtic ſtreams. The one are of an uneven and precarious current. The other overflow their banks, and yet are never diminiſhed. The one depend on ſprings which are often dry. The other are ſupplied from a ſhoreleſs and unfathomable ocean.——Such ſublime pleaſure, then, let us indulge, ſuch exalted improvement let us ſeek, on this auguſt occaſion, on this auſpicious day, in the pious contemplation, and grateful acknowledgment, of "the manifold and ſignal mercies which diſtinguiſh our lot as a nation."

To the contemplation of theſe mercies, and of their divine Author, we are naturally led, by that paſſage of the ſacred Word ſelected for the theme of this Diſcourſe. It contains ſome of the very laſt words of *Moſes, the man of God;* and is a part of that ſolemn benediction, which he addreſſed to the children of Iſrael, juſt *before his death*. Having, under the auſpices of Heaven, conducted this favoured people from Egyptian ſervitude to the plains of Moab, ſo near to the borders of Canaan, as to be able, from a neighbouring mountain, to ſee the promiſed land; he calls together the twelve tribes, and takes his final leave of them, in a manner worthy of a great Prophet,

phet, and of the Father of the people. Calling each tribe by its name, and in its proper order, he pronounces a bleſſing peculiar to each. And now, collecting all theſe bleſſings into one central point—with a heart full of love to the dear people whom he is about to leave; of joy in the knowledge of their preſent, and in the prophetic aſſurance of their future, happineſs; and of pious gratitude to that Being who had diſtinguiſhed them with ſuch unexampled favours——he exclaims: HAPPY ART THOU, O ISRAEL: WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE, O PEOPLE SAVED BY THE LORD, THE SHIELD OF THY HELP, AND WHO IS THE SWORD OF THY EXCELLENCY!—The higheſt wiſh of the holy prophet is now fulfilled. He retires to the deſignated mount—and dies.

The paſſage choſen for our Text is, with a mere exchange of name, ſo ſtrictly applicable to AMERICA, that, without a rigid adherence to its original application, I ſhall not heſitate to apply it to the favoured people of theſe United States.

HAPPY ART THOU, O ISRAEL.—If Iſrael was, at this time, happy in the expectation of the fertile land of Paleſtine; and ſtill happier, afterward, in the actual poſſeſſion of it; this American Iſrael is favoured, in like manner, with an extenſive territory, not yielding, in the fertility of its ſoil, and variety of its produce, to any country on earth. A moderate ſhare of induſtry, in the cultivation of this land, will always

always, with the common ſmiles of Heaven, procure to its inhabitants a rich ſupply of the neceſſaries and comforts of life. We may literally adopt the language of the Pſalmiſt: *The lines are fallen to us in pleaſant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage.*

But, inſtead of dwelling on the conſideration of this very important bleſſing, let us proceed to conſider thoſe numerous and ſignal mercies by which our nation is diſtinguiſhed, and which are enumerated in the Proclamation of our illuſtrious PRESIDENT, as what afford ſpecial cauſe, this day, for national Thankſgiving and Praiſe.

The firſt public bleſſing, to which our attention is called, is—"the poſſeſſion of conſtitutions of government which unite, and, by their union, eſtabliſh liberty with order."——What is man, without liberty? He is little better than a machine, controuled by the will, and ſubſervient to the uſe, of another. The nobleſt energies of his ſoul are ſuppreſſed; and he is incapable of thoſe deſigns, and of thoſe actions, which ſtamp a dignity on the human name. Read this melancholy truth in the countenance and deportment of the poor African, born in ſlavery. Read it in the more enlightened and generous European, or American, when chained to the gallies for life. —Extend the queſtion from an individual to a community; and—what is a nation, without liberty? A mere ſervile herd, void of improvement in morals, of

of refinement in civility, in arts and ſciences, and reſembling the beaſts of the foreſt, rather than men. Read this humiliating truth in the degraded character of the preſent inhabitants of thoſe celebrated countries where Athens, Sparta, and Corinth, once ſtood; where learning and liberty once reigned triumphant; where the free and allied States of Greece roſe ſuperiour to the arms, and to the gold, of tyrants; and where a ſplendid example was exhibited to the human race of the mighty influence of Freedom on national happineſs and dignity.——But why do I tell a free people the value of liberty? Ye know its worth. *With a great ſum obtained* ye *this freedom.* Nor was it a mercenary purchaſe. The blood ſpilled at Lexington was but an earneſt of the coſtly payment. The entire purchaſe was ratified by the blood of thouſands.——Nor was it ratified in vain. While the acquiſition of liberty has raiſed us to national independence, and to national happineſs, it has put us in poſſeſſion of conſtitutions of government, which, with a divine bleſſing, will enſure permanency to our liberty.

The opportunity, providentially given us, of forming plans of government on the moſt rational, juſt, and equal principles, has been altogether unparalleled. "I confeſs,"—ſaid a ſenſible and patriotic Divine,* in the year 1775, and one who, the year following,

* Preſident WITHERSPOON.

lowing, ſigned his name in Congreſs to the DECLARATION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE—"I confeſs I have always looked upon this with a kind of enthuſiaſtic ſatisfaction. The caſe never happened before ſince the world began. All governments we have read of in former ages, were ſettled by caprice or accident, by the influence of prevailing parties or particular perſons, or preſcribed by a conqueror. Important improvements have indeed been forced upon ſome conſtitutions by the ſpirit of daring men, ſupported by ſucceſsful inſurrections. But to ſee a government, in large and populous countries, ſettled from its foundation by deliberate counſel, and directed immediately to the public good of the preſent and future generations, while the people are waiting for the deciſion, with full confidence in the wiſdom and impartiality of thoſe to whom they have committed the important truſt, is certainly altogether new. We learn, indeed, from hiſtory, that ſmall tribes, and feeble new ſettlements, did ſometimes employ one man of eminent wiſdom to prepare a ſyſtem of laws for them. Even this was a wiſe meaſure, and attended with happy effects. But how vaſt the difference! when we have the experience of all ages, the hiſtory of human ſocieties, and the well-known cauſes of proſperity and miſery in other governments to aſſiſt us in the choice."—Of this propitious and unprecedented opportunity, the enlightened

ened ſtateſmen of our country appear to have availed themſelves to the utmoſt. And if the mere anticipation of an opportunity of forming rational and equitable plans of government awakened in the patriotic breaſt emotions bordering on enthuſiaſm; what boſom will not beat with emotions of tranſport, in the review of the happy effects of the grand experiment? For each of the individual States a CONSTITUTION has been framed, which ſecures to its citizens their moſt highly valued and unalienable rights. By theſe Conſtitutions, that ineſtimable right—on which all other rights ſo greatly depend—the right of free and frequent elections is enſured. Our *Governours proceed from ourſelves;* and, in every State but four,* their election is annual. In every State, the Repreſentatives of the people are annually choſen. With the ſecurity of this right, in connexion with the particular rights expreſsly noticed and ſecured by the ſeveral Conſtitutions, our liberties are evidently placed on the firmeſt baſis.

In addition to that ſecurity which is given to our liberties by the Conſtitution of each State; theſe liberties derive their higheſt ſecurity and ſupport, under GOD, from the CONSTITUTION of the UNITED STATES. By that union which is formed, by this Conſtitution, between

* NEW-YORK, DELAWARE, SOUTH-CAROLINA and GEORGIA. The Governour in the two former States is elected for three years; the Governour of South-Carolina, for two: the Governour of Georgia, by the reviſed and altered Conſtitution of 1789, is alſo elected for two years.

between the ſeveral States, each State participates the power, and the privileges, of all the others; and an energy is thus given to the ſeparate parts, as well as to the combined whole, of this vaſt republic. The Federal Government is as truly the government of our own formation, as that of this Commonwealth. It was deviſed and adopted by "The people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, eſtabliſh juſtice, inſure domeſtic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and ſecure the bleſſings of liberty to themſelves and their poſterity." Theſe patriotic and glorious purpoſes have been, thus far, carried into effect, in a degree beyond what could have been expected, even with the aid of a ſanguine imagination. The general proſperity of our country—which will preſently come under conſideration—is a full and happy proof, both of the excellence of the Conſtitution itſelf, and of the wiſdom and integrity with which that government, which it ordains, is adminiſtered. It need only be added, that, by this Conſtitution, the Preſident of the United States, and the Vice-Preſident, are elected every four years—that the Senate is totally changed every ſix years, and one third of it every two years—and that the Repreſentatives in Congreſs are elected for two years only;—that, both by this Conſtitution, and by the ſeveral State Conſtitutions, the Legiſlative, Judiciary, and Executive

ecutive branches of government are kept ſeparate from each other—that all the landed and other property is in the hands of the citizens—that the preſs is free—that the privilege of trial by Jury is eſtabliſhed—and that a regular method of amending the federal Conſtitution, and all the State Conſtitutions, is legally ſecured to the citizens.—What freer form of government can a nation expect, or deſire?

With this freedom, order is eſtabliſhed by our government. Our "conſtitutions unite, and, by their union, eſtabliſh liberty with order."—Perfect liberty is not deſtined for man, in this imperfect ſtate. Ambition, pride, paſſion, and a thouſand irregular deſires of the ſoul, if permitted to have unlimited operation, would burſt aſunder the ſacred ties by which ſociety is held in union. Salutary reſtraint is eſſential to liberty; and they, who, either from ignorance, or from turbulence of diſpoſition, aim to throw off all coercion, are, whatever may be their pretenſions, real enemies to freedom. This reſtraint is probably as ſmall, in our republican governments, as the nature of ſociety will ſafely admit. It is a reſtraint preſcribed by the laws, and not left to the arbitrary or capricious dictates of men. It requires the ſacrifice of a ſmall portion of liberty for the ſecurity of the remainder; and debars neither individuals, nor combinations of men, from any freedom, but that of doing injuries with impunity. Thus

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the reſtraint of our laws is productive of order; and order is equally the ornament, and the ſafe-guard, of liberty.

"The preſervation of our peace, foreign and domeſtic"—forms the next article in the Inventory of our national bleſſings.—But little more than a year has elapſed, ſince we were on the verge of hoſtilities with a foreign nation. The early Proclamation of neutrality by the PRESIDENT, expreſſive of a watchful ſolicitude for the welfare of the nation—the active and well directed exertions of intelligent and diſpaſſionate members of Congreſs—together with the good ſenſe of the collective body of the American people, have, under God, preſerved our peace with the nations of Europe. The appointment of an Envoy Extraordinary to the King of England, to remonſtrate on the ſubject of the ſpoliations on our commerce—in full confidence, "that he would vindicate our rights with firmneſs, and cultivate peace with ſincerity"—was the finiſhing ſtroke of this equitable and pacific policy. It has repreſſed the inflammatory ſpirits in our country; moderated, if not ſilenced, the clamour of meditated revenge; and kept the nation in majeſtic ſuſpenſe for the momentous deciſion.—In the mean time, our militia has become better organized; our ſea-ports have been put in a better poſture of defence; and, as an additional ſecurity to theſe and to our commerce, we are becoming

ing furniſhed with a naval armament.—The expected deciſion, however, is obtained. A Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation has been concluded between the Britiſh King and the United States—"in which," ſaith the King, in his late ſpeech to the Parliament, "it has been my object to remove, as far as poſſible, all grounds of jealouſy and miſunderſtanding, and to improve an intercourſe beneficial to both countries."—The principal avenue to danger, therefore, with reſpect to foreign hoſtilities, is now cloſed; and we may indulge the pleaſing hope of maintaining peace with all the world.

Nor may we forget to record the preſervation of our "domeſtic peace."—However favoured in preſerving peace abroad; without the additional bleſſing of peace at home, we muſt become a miſerable and ruined people. Civil wars are, of all, the moſt furious and deſtructive, always terminating in the diminution of the treaſure and ſtrength of a nation, and, not unfrequently, in the entire loſs of its liberty. But, through the bleſſing of Heaven, our domeſtic peace is happily preſerved. This preſervation is the more worthy of notice, after the recent and wanton aſſault which has threatened our internal tranquillity.

Accordingly, we are directed to expreſs our gratitude to God, "for the ſeaſonable controul which has been given to a ſpirit of diſorder, in the ſuppreſ-

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ſion of the late inſurrection."—It is an humiliating conſideration, that mankind know not how rightly to eſtimate their bleſſings. The ſame freedom which we enjoy is equably diffuſed throughout the American nation. General laws, indeed, extending to ſo numerous a people, differing in their habits and intereſts, will hardly fail to operate with ſome inequality. This difficulty was felt, and acknowledged, by the CONVENTION which framed the Federal Conſtitution. "It is at all times difficult"—ſaid this Convention—"to draw with preciſion the line between thoſe rights which muſt be ſurrendered, and thoſe which may be reſerved; and on the preſent occaſion this difficulty was increaſed by a difference among the ſeveral States as to their ſituation, extent, habits, and particular intereſts.—In all our deliberations on this ſubject we kept ſteadily on our view, that which appears to us the greateſt intereſt of every true American, the conſolidation of our Union, in which is involved our proſperity, felicity, ſafety, perhaps our national exiſtence." Noble ſentiments! worthy the patriotic Repreſentatives of a free and patriotic People! May they be deeply engraven on every American boſom!—Had theſe ſentiments been cultivated by the citizens in the weſtern Counties of Pennſylvania, the laws would have been reverenced, the voice of the nation obeyed, and Faction would neither have inclined, nor dared, to lift up her head. The operation

of

of a general law, designed and adapted to raise, in the easiest manner, the national revenue, furnished, or by designing men was made, the pretext for insurgency. The flame of dissention was kindled. Deaf to the remonstrances of reason, and even to that well-known voice* which proclaimed to the seditious the olive-branch, or the sword; these children of Anarchy rallied around the standard of Rebellion, and appealed to arms. But, blessed be God! the "spirit of disorder," which is the parent of *confusion and of every evil work*, was seasonably controuled. The vigilant GUARDIAN of our country, like a tutelar angel, hasted to ward off the impending danger. Fell Discord laid down her arms at the approach of a Patriot Army; and the miserable remnant of her progeny fled from that society which it had insulted and injured—to seek a hapless asylum in the forest, or the wilderness.—This event, apparently inauspicious, has more firmly established the constituted authorities, and confirmed the internal tranquillity of the nation.†

In addition to the recollection, and grateful acknowledgment, of these particular blessings, we are reminded to render thanks to God, "generally for the

* See the President's Proclamation to the Insurgents.

† It must give a sincere pleasure to every friend of humanity and of our country, to know that our domestic peace has received a recent confirmation by a Treaty of Peace, ratified in January by the President, between the United States and the Cherokees, and another Treaty between the United States and the Six Nations.

the prosperous course of our affairs, public and private."—In a general view, the voice of health, of plenty, and of peace, is heard in our favoured land. Agriculture is daily receiving new and important improvements. Commerce flourishes. Arts and Manufactures are making a progress unknown before. Learning is perpetually increasing the number of her votaries and patrons. National credit is established. And "all classes of our citizens" are blessed with unexampled prosperity.

HAVING thus contemplated our national happiness in an *absolute* view; let us, now, take a *comparative* view of the same subject. The Text and the Proclamation unite in inviting us to this view. It may be indulged without inflating national vanity, or tempting to the insolence of national triumph. It will have an influence directly the reverse of my design, unless it inspire emotions of gratitude for the blessings of our own nation, and a generous sympathy for those nations which are strangers to our happiness.

WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE?—When the prophet made this exclamation, no people on earth could be compared, for their happiness, with the people of Israel. But mark the awful effects of national corruption and apostacy! Jerusalem, their once flourishing capital, is *trodden down of the Gentiles*. Not one stone of that temple, which was once the admiration

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of the world, is now left upon another. That nation, once the *peculiar people* of God, torn away from their own excellent country, are ſcattered over all the countries of the earth. Nor is any nation now to be found *like unto* this nation, for its miſery.—Let this awfully memorable example ever be in our view, to impreſs our minds with that ſacred truth: *The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him—but, if ye forſake Him, He alſo will forſake you.*

To reſume the queſtion, then, with the united exerciſes of gratitude and of humility in its application to AMERICA—*Who is like unto thee?*—AFRICA, which once contained ſeveral kingdoms and ſtates eminent for the liberal arts, for wealth and power, and for the moſt extenſive commerce, now lies buried in profound ignorance and barbariſm.——ASIA, a diviſion of the globe including a vaſt extent of territory, and capable of furniſhing the beſt productions of earth, is principally inhabited by nations which have never ſeen the light of Science, of true Religion, or of Liberty. The prevailing form of their governments is abſolute monarchy. If any of the Aſiatic nations can be ſaid to enjoy ſome ſhare of freedom, they are the wandering tribes, as the Tartars and Arabs. But we can form no very elevated opinion of their dignity, or of their happineſs, when we are told, that the one reſemble our North American Indians; and that the other are a nation of

thieves

thieves and pirates.——EUROPE, long celebrated for its ſuperiour civilization and refinement, is, even now, principally poſſeſſed by nations which are ſtrangers to that liberty with which the God of nature hath ordained man to be free. The European governments are, generally, arbitrary monarchies. Some are ariſtocracies, ſcarcely leſs arbitrary. Neither of theſe require any comment, where the queſtion reſpects national happineſs. Neither of them are free governments; and, therefore, the people who are ſubject to them cannot be happy.—If we look into thoſe nations, whoſe more eligible forms of government ſeem to promiſe more freedom, and more happineſs; we ſhall hardly fail of diſappointment. That very enlightened ſtateſman, and diſtinguiſhed patriot, now in the Vice-Preſidency of the United States—after taking a view of thoſe countries in Europe, where the government may be called, in any reaſonable conſtruction of the word, republican—makes the following obſervation: "To our inexpreſſible mortification we muſt have remarked, that the people have preſerved a ſhare of power, or an exiſtence in the government, in no country out of England, except upon the tops of a few inacceſſible mountains, among rocks and precipices, in territories ſo narrow that you may ſpan them with an hand's breadth, where, living unenvied, in extreme poverty, chiefly upon paſturage, deſtitute of manufactures and commerce, they ſtill exhibit the

moſt

moſt charming picture of life, and the moſt dignified character of human nature."* Such is the gloomy portrait of the moſt free and civilized nations of Europe! The exception of ſome of the Swiſs Cantons, and of the Republic of St. Marino in Italy—for to theſe the exception here made muſt principally refer—is too inconſiderable to merit peculiar notice. And, although England is another exception; her freedom is not comparable with that of America. An hereditary king—an hereditary houſe of lords—a ſeptennial parliament—a very unequal repreſentation of the people—the legal incapacity of a large and reſpectable claſs of citizens† to hold any office of honour or profit in the kingdom, and even to ſhare the privilege of an education for their children at either of the national Univerſities—are circumſtances which ſtamp diſgrace on the boaſted Conſtitution of England, and which are abſolutely incompatible with ſome of the moſt eſſential and unalienable rights of man.——Thoſe European nations, which have recently acquired a thirſt for liberty, have not yet gotten poſſeſſion of the valuable boon. France, in ſtruggling for her freedom, is obliged to maintain a conteſt, hitherto ſucceſsful, with hoſts of combined nations, once formidable, but unequal to a conteſt with

* Defence of the American Conſtitutions, Vol. I.

† The Proteſtant Diſſenters.

with men determined to be free. While we anticipate the final triumph of liberty; it is obvious to remark, that such expensive hostilities abroad, and the destructions of Vandalism* at home, must, for the present, rob this mighty nation of liberty and peace.†——Ill-fated Poland! When thou wert at the goal, just ready to seize the prize of freedom, the rapacious Empress of the North, and a royal Plunderer,‡ snatch from thee, and divide, the palm. Were it the age of miracles, I would fervently pray that Kosciusko§ might, even now, burst his chains, and, like another Washington, restore liberty to his country.——Geneva, a Republic which had just recovered its liberties, has recently lost them, through the base intrigues of a French democratical faction. The usurping power, by a refinement in wickedness, has added impiety to cruelty, and sacrilege to anarchical tyranny. Having banished, or destroyed, the best of the citizens, and plundered their estates, it

* This word, newly coined in France, plainly alludes to the Vandals, who, with other ferocious tribes of the North, near the end of the 5th century, made such memorable devastations in the Roman Empire, extinguished literature, and brought on the Dark Age.

† See Gregoire's Report on the destruction wrought by Vandalism.

‡ Catharine of Russia, and the King of Prussia.

§ A Polish General who served, in the contest for American liberty, under General Washington; and who has fought with distinguished courage and patriotism, for the liberty of his own country—but without success. In an action between his army and the Russians, he was wounded and taken prisoner.—Poland, according to the latest accounts, is now wholly subject to the despots named in the last note.

it has even interdicted divine worſhip; and the Geneveſe churches are no longer open but for baptiſm. This Republic, lately ſo reſpectable* and happy, is now "loſt without reſource, in reſpect to religion, to morals, to the ſciences, to the fine arts, to trade, to liberty, and, above all, to internal peace."†—— South America—to relinquiſh a view of the Old World,

* Geneva has been famous for its early and ſtedfaſt adherence to the Proteſtant Intereſt; for the refuge it has given to thouſands of people perſecuted for their religion; for the valuable books it has printed; for its academy; and for the number of eminent theological and literary characters which it has produced. It was the birth-place, or at leaſt the reſidence, of John Calvin, Theodore Beza, the Diodati, the Turretines, M. le Clerc, Rouſſeau, and many other ſcholars well known in the Republic of Letters.

† See "Authentic History of the Origin and Progreſs of the late Revolution in Geneva."—In 1782, Count Vergennes, with a military force, overwhelmed the popular party at Geneva, and eſtabliſhed a uſurped government, in oppoſition to the well known will of the majority of the citizens. Upon the death of the Count, the fundamental Conſtitution was re-eſtabliſhed on its republican baſis; and every article of the litigation which had been maintained for a century paſt between the Aſſembly of the people, and the Adminiſtrative bodies, was definitively adjudged in favour of the former. This reſtoration of liberty commenced in 1789, and was completed in 1791. General Monteſquiou was now commiſſioned by the French Republic to enter Geneva; and actually advanced in force to declare war againſt it. Every pretext for this hoſtile invaſion was ſo ably removed by the Geneveſe, that this worthy general became their advocate, gat his orders revoked, and obtained authority to negociate pacifically with Geneva. A Treaty was accordingly reciprocally ſigned, and concluded. In compliance with one article of this Treaty, the Geneveſe were ſending back the Swiſs, whom, in the time of danger, they had called in to their aid; when they were ſurprized with the information, that the Convention refuſed to ratify the Treaty, but on condition of inſerting new clauſes. For the purpoſe of exacting this condition, M. Genet—whoſe name, or character, requires no explanation—was ſent to Geneva. It was now diſcovered, that the Convention was determined to operate a political revolution here, after its own principles. The leaven, now introduced, penetrated the whole maſs.—The ſubſequent hiſtory of this devoted Republic muſt fill every humane mind with ſympathetic concern, and horror. It affords an inſtructive leſſon to Americans.—We, through divine favour, are bleſſed with a genuine republican government. If, under whatever pretext, a foreigner, or even a citizen of our own, attempt to alter it, otherwiſe than in the *conſtitutional method*,—beware of him!

—Hic niger eſt; hunc tu, Romane, caveto.

Hor.

World, for that of the New—is principally ſubject to the crowns of Spain and of Portugal. The vice-roys, who govern for their royal maſters, are, like them, arbitrary and oppreſſive; and the poor ſubjects, whether natives, or Europeans, are in a miſerable ſtate of ignorance, ſuperſtition and ſervitude.——"When," therefore—in the language of the Proclamation—"we review the calamities which afflict ſo many other nations, the preſent condition of the United States affords much matter of conſolation and ſatisfaction."—If, eſpecially,—to uſe once more the language of the Vice-Preſident—we "compare the conſtitutions" of other nations "with thoſe of the United States of America, we ſhall have no reaſon to bluſh for our country; on the contrary, we ſhall feel the ſtrongeſt motives to fall upon our knees, in gratitude to Heaven for having been graciouſly pleaſed to give us birth and education in that country, and for having deſtined us to live under her laws!"

We are reminded, then, to enquire—To whom we are indebted for this diſtinction in national freedom and happineſs. Our Text furniſhes an anſwer to the enquiry: O People saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!——Theſe figurative expreſſions, *the ſhield of thy help*, and, *the ſword of thy excellency*, denote, after the Hebrew manner, the interpoſition

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of the moſt High in the defence and ſalvation of his people. THE LORD was a SHIELD to Iſrael, in affording it defence amidſt unnumbered dangers. He was a SWORD, in ſubduing its enemies, and in bringing it, againſt all oppoſition, into the land of promiſe. *Excellency** ſeems to imply *elevation* in happineſs and dignity. GOD was the Author of this elevation. HE *made* Iſrael *high above all nations in praiſe, and in name, and in honour.*

HE is equally the Author of *our* elevation. We, too, are a *People ſaved by the* LORD. He is *the ſhield of* our *help; and the ſword of* our *excellency.* In contending for our liberties, He *taught* our *hands to war, and* our *fingers to fight.—If it had not been* THE LORD *who was on our ſide, when men roſe up againſt us; then they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled againſt us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the ſtream had gone over our ſoul.—He who rideth upon the heaven in our help, and in his excellency on the ſky,* even *the eternal* GOD *was our refuge, and underneath* were *the everlaſting arms.* He *turned the counſels* of our enemies *into fooliſhneſs,* and *made* their *judges fools.* He gave counſel to our counſellors, and *taught* our *Senators wiſdom.* He inſpired our civil rulers in the cabinet, and our military brethren in the field, with a ſpirit of patriotiſm and of union unknown before in the revolutions of the world. He raiſed up the

* In the original, גאות.

illuſtrious WASHINGTON, and furniſhed him with that aſtoniſhing aſſemblage of military and political talents, which qualified him, like another MOSES, to guide the armies of America to victory and triumph —to unite her citizens in one grand confederacy— and to preſide in her national government with unparalleled dignity and glory.* While we acknowledge the inſtrumentality of ſecond cauſes; their origin, and their ſucceſsful efficacy, muſt be aſcribed to JEHOVAH. It is equally true, with regard to the contentions of nations, and with regard to the contentions of the elements, that HE - - "Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the ſtorm." He, with the ſame almighty energy, *ſtilleth the noiſe of the ſeas, the noiſe of their waves, and the tumult of the people. Promotion*, whether of individuals, or of nations, *cometh neither from the eaſt, nor from the weſt, nor from the ſouth. But* GOD *is the Judge: He putteth down one, and ſetteth up another. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the ſtrength of the mighty.—He increaſeth the nations, and deſtroyeth them: He enlargeth the nations, and ſtraiteneth them again. At what inſtant* He *ſpeaketh concerning a nation*, or *concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to deſtroy it*; that nation, or that kingdom, is brought to deſolation. *At what inſtant* He *ſpeaketh concerning a nation*, or *concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant it*; that nation, or that kingdom,

* Her crown in peace, as once her ſhield in war.
Dr. AIKIN.

kingdom, riſes into celebrity and happineſs. To HIM are we indebted for the recovery and eſtabliſhment of our invaluable liberties, for the ſuppreſſion of that conſpiracy which recently threatened them, and for the manifold and ſignal mercies which we, this day, commemorate.* For thoſe liberties, for theſe diſtinguiſhed mercies, let us "render our ſincere and hearty thanks to the great Ruler of nations." With reiterated voice, let us unite in diſclaiming the merit of our national happineſs, and in aſcribing all our felicity to God: *Not unto us*, O LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.—Unto Thee*, O GOD, *do we give thanks, unto Thee do we give thanks.* Let all our faculties exert their vigour, in rendering this tribute of praiſe to Almighty God. *Bleſs the Lord*, O our *ſouls; and all that is within* us, *bleſs his holy name. Bleſs the Lord*, O our *ſouls, and forget not all his benefits.—He hath not dealt ſo with any nation.—Praiſe ye the Lord.*

WHILE we pay this tribute of national gratitude for our national bleſſings, let us—as it is recommended to us—"humbly and fervently beſeech the kind Author of them graciouſly to prolong them to us." And, in connexion with our prayers for the divine aid to enable us to make a proper uſe of our bleſſings, let us, as we would rationally expect *an anſwer of peace*, do what in us lies to promote the great deſigns

* DEUS nobis hæc otia fecit.
VIRGIL.

deſigns which are noticed in the Proclamation, as requiring our humble and fervent ſupplications to the moſt High. Let us pray to God "to imprint on our hearts a deep and ſolemn ſenſe of our obligations to Him" for theſe bleſſings; and, at the ſame time, cheriſh a ſenſe of theſe obligations in our own boſoms. Let us pray to Him "to teach us rightly to eſtimate the immenſe value" of our bleſſings, and, at the ſame time, endeavour to learn this right eſtimation.—Let us pray to Him "to preſerve us from the arrogance of proſperity;" and, at the ſame time, ſtudiouſly guard againſt national arrogance. Where are now the great empires of the world? How many have fallen a ſacrifice to the pride of proſperity and power! The example of haughty and imperious BABYLON alone ſhould ſufficiently teach us to be humble forever, and to *rejoice with trembling*. Her language was—*I am, and none elſe beſide me; I ſhall not ſit as a widow.* The voice of JEHOVAH was—*Sit thou ſilent, and get thee into darkneſs, O daughter of the Chaldeans! for thou ſhalt no more be called the lady of kingdoms.*—Let us pray to God to preſerve us "from hazarding the advantages we enjoy by deluſive purſuits;" and, at the ſame time, guard againſt this egregious folly. If, as a nation, we are ſurrounded by "circumſtances which peculiarly mark our ſituation with indications of the divine beneficence toward us;" why ſhould we ſlight the boun-

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ties of Heaven, or deſtroy our own happineſs? If our advantages are ſo real, and of ſuch "immenſe value;" why ſhould we hazard their loſs by ſuch purſuits as may terminate in deluſion?—Actually poſſeſſed of the ſubſtance, why ſhould we relinquiſh it for a ſhadow?—In this connexion permit me to recommend a proper confidence in our Rulers. Having, firſt, elected thoſe who are worthy of the important truſt, let us not with-hold from them our confidence, through an unreaſonable jealouſy. Why ſhould it be imagined, in a government like our's, that the moment when one of our fellow-citizens is choſen into office, he has an intereſt ſeparate from our own, and that he will infallibly conſult the injury of his conſtituents? Such an imagination is, in general, not merely ill-founded in itſelf; but it is productive of the moſt baneful effects in community. It tends to diminiſh the energy of the laws—to leſſen the attachment of the citizens to the government which they themſelves have formed—and to generate a party-ſpirit, deſtructive of national peace and happineſs. Vigilance becomes men. It is the characteriſtic of freemen. Like the Veſtal Virgins, guard, night and day, the ſacred flame which ye have kindled on the altar of LIBERTY. But beware, leſt, by too cloſe a preſſure, ye ſmother it forever.—Let us guard againſt inteſtine diviſions;—and againſt the introduction of the indigeſted, heterogeneous, poli-

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tics of foreign nations. The deſtruction of the Grecian Republics teaches us the fatality of the one: the ruins of Geneva mark the danger of the other.—While we implore "the continuance of" the divine "favours;" let us ſeek to ſecure that continuance, "by not abuſing them, by our gratitude for them, and by a correſpondent conduct as citizens, as men," and as Chriſtians.—While we pray to God "to render this country more and more a ſafe and propitious aſylum for the unfortunate of other countries;" let us open our arms for the reception and patronage of oppreſſed Innocence.—While we pray to Him "to extend among us true and uſeful knowledge;" let us cordially cheriſh every inſtitution deſigned for this important purpoſe—eſpecially this ancient and reſpectable UNIVERSITY.—While we pray to Him "to diffuſe and eſtabliſh habits of ſobriety, order, morality and piety;" let us ſtudiouſly cultivate theſe very habits. Let us make a ſober and temperate uſe of all our bleſſings, and eſpecially of our liberty.—Under our excellent conſtitutions, and adminiſtrations, of government, let us *lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty*.—Let us obſerve the pure and ſublime precepts of CHRISTIANITY—a religion as conducive to national happineſs, as it is to individual felicity in the preſent, and in a future, world.—To ſum up all, let us *render unto Ceſar the things which are Ceſar's, and unto* GOD *the things which are* GOD's.

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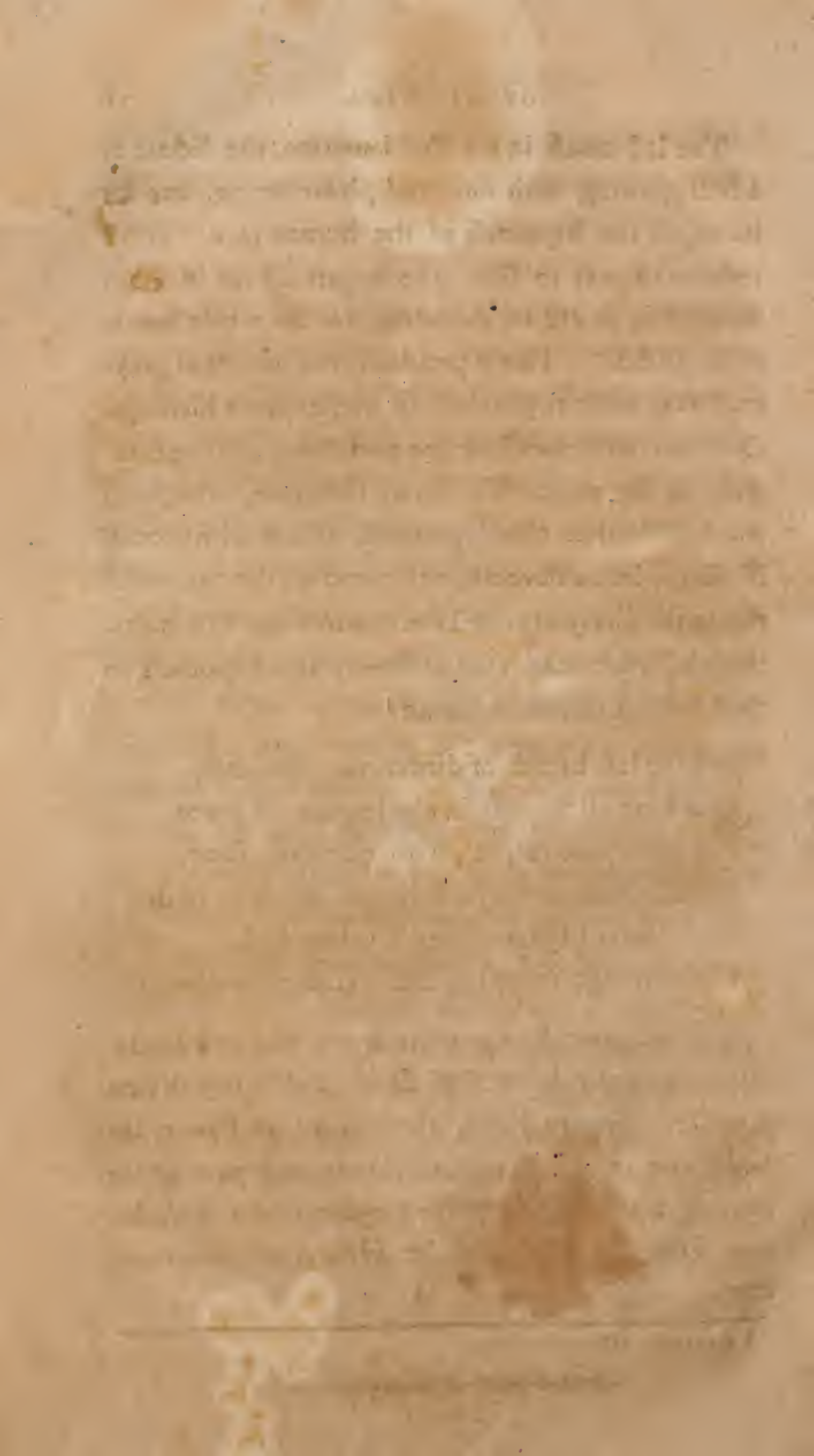
The laſt clauſe in the Proclamation, the dictate of a ſoul glowing with univerſal philanthropy, has for its object the happineſs of the human race. It directs us to pray to God "to impart all the bleſſings we poſſeſs, or aſk for ourſelves, to the whole family of mankind." This is peculiarly the ſubject of prayer. It is not our province to impart theſe bleſſings. On GOD we depend for the poſſeſſion, and continuance, of our own. To HIM, therefore, who hath the diſtribution of all perſonal, and of all national, bleſſings, let us devoutly commend all the nations of the earth. May HE quell the commotions which agitate the world, and impart liberty and happineſs to the whole family of mankind!

Bid the laſt breath of dire contention ceaſe,
And bind all nations in the leagues of peace,
Bid one great empire, with extenſive ſway,
Spread with the ſun, and bound the walks of day,
One centred ſyſtem, one all-ruling ſoul,
Live through the parts, and regulate the whole!*

O Thou great RULER of nations! who haſt *ſet* thy KING *upon* thy *holy hill of Zion.* Fulfil thy divine promiſe. *Give* to JESUS, the PRINCE of PEACE, *the heathen for* an *inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for* a *poſſeſſion.* Let *the kingdoms of this world become* HIS kingdom, and let HIM *reign forever and ever.* AMEN.

* BARLOW's Viſion of Columbus.